SWAMI RAMANAND TEERTH MARATHWADA UNIVERSITY

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A Doctoral Resume

A Critical Study of Select Indian Graphic Novels

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Introduction:

Genesis of the Graphic Novel -

Graphic Novel is developed through the contribution of various artistic forms such as cave painting or rock arts in the ancient period and painting, sculpture in the modern period. Artist from different walks of life, through their image painting assigns meaning to their surroundings and communicated their view or ideas in the form of pictorial image of wild life, their culture, nature and peoples around them. It was one type of storytelling. During the period of Muslim Emperors in India, artists illustrated their art and depicted the mythical stories of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. It was a very significant role played to popularize the epics, myths and legends in unique way. There are some prejudices about the graphic novels. Most of the people are of the view that graphic narration is immature, inferior form of art particularly for the children. It lacks the seriousness and incapable of representing the sensitive issues. In recent times the world of comics' books contributes a lot for the development of this genre.

The term *Graphic Novel* gains currency with the publication of comics of William Erwin Eisner's *A Contract with God* (1978). He used the term to distinguish his book from the collection of newspaper comic strips. The genesis of the term is inseparably tied with the history of comics in the western countries. Richard F. Outcaults single panel cartoon *The Yellow kid* attracted the people's attention in the 19th century. It was commercialized in America and featured on Unisex T-shirts, Cigarette cards etc. In Germany, during the first half of 20th century, there flourished the new forms of wordless novels or woodcut Novels. Fras Masereel's*25 images of a man's passion* (1918) belongs to this category. However, in the year 1933, two Jewish kids from Midwest, Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster created *Superman*. From that point of time started the heroic adventures such as Bob Kane and Bill Finger's *Batman*, William Moulton and H.G. Peter's *Wonder Woman*, Joe Simon and Jack Kirby's *Captain America* and Jack Cole's *plastic man*. During the Second World War publishers and artists made these superheroes fight against the ally's forces. The cover page of *Captain America's* (1941) inaugural issue displayed the protagonist landing roundhouse punch on Hitler's chin. After the Second World War there witnessed the encouraging concept of Fandom as the comic book lovers gathered in various hotels. There they discussed on it and also buys comics. Jules Feiffer's tribute work The *Great comic Book Heroes* (1965) is an

example of this kind. The popularity of comics increased at that juncture and there was large mushrooming of comic's book stores across the United States of America. New companies such as *Fanta graphic* and *Warp Graphics* emerge to meet this rising demand in the market.

From the comics gradually the graphic novel evolves and now it is recognized as literary genre. It can be described as a book of some book length that is to be read as a one story. There is difference between the comics and the novel. The distinguishing features can be briefly summarized as follows:

- Comics are serialized stories and episodic in nature. They are the part of the periodicals or magazines whereas the graphic novel created in a book form.
- The narration technique is slightly differing as the comics writer has to sustain the attention of the reader for the next episode whereas it is not with novel
- The paper used for comics is chaperone having low quality; on the other hand, for novel the paper is of best quality and in a hard-binding form.
- Thematically the contents used for the graphic novel is more complex one. It may cover wide ranging themes from the society where as comics is confined itself to the stories of superheroes or adventurous stories.

Hence Graphic Novel is something worth reading for adult readers. At the same time due to the inventions in the field of information and communication technologies; various facilities are prevalent in the society such as the use of Internet, smart phones, smart televisions, computer etc. with the changed scenario image is becoming very prominent one. We are constantly receiving the symbolic use of images from varied sources such as drawings, textbook illustrations, advertisements, magazines, scientific diagrams, traffic signals on road etc. These images convey something more than the words. This development in science also influenced the graphic novel.

The first Graphic novel appeared *Blood stars* illustrated by Richard Corben in the year 1976. It is based on the short story of Robert Howard who created the sword and sorcery hero-Conan, the barbarian. In the last half of the 20th century with the publication of Arts Spigelman's *Maus: A survivors Tale* (1986) by Pantheon Books; this form of literature becomes very popular one. This work won the prestigious Pulitzer Prize in year 1992. Later Frank Millers novel entitled *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns* (1986) [illustrated by Miller and Klaus Janson] and Alan More's *Watchmen* (1987) [illustrated by Dave Gibbons] published. Due to these novels there increased the sale of the graphic novels. At the same time there are some novels which are adopted for the film version. These are *Batman* (1989),

Captain America (1990), *Batman Returns* (1992), *Batman and Robin*(1997), *Blade* (1998), *Spiderman* (2002) etc. Even the American Library Association organized a Symposium in 2002 on this subject. Graphic Novelist Arts Spiegeleman had delivered the lecture in that congregation.

Indian Novels journey from classic to new postmodern Graphic Presentation:

Indian novels in Indian writing in English started from the first novel entitled *Rajmohan's Wife* by the novelist Bankim Chandra Chatterjee in 1864. The journey of this genre can be divided into three phases- a traditional novel before independence, Modern novel of experimentation after independence and the contemporary novel i.e. postmodern novel since 1981. During the first phase Indianness, spirit of patriotism and brotherhood were the thematic concerns. Writers like Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Toru Dutt, Ram Krishna Pant, Tarachand Mukharjee, Mirza Beg, Bijay Chand, Krupabai Satthianandhan, Ramesh chunder Dutt etc. composed the novels. Gandhian Movement also influenced the writings of the novelist like K.S.Venkatramani, Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K.Narayan. Last three writers had contributed a lot in the development of the pre-independent as well as the post-independence period. Particularly the novels of Mulk Raj Anand *Untouchable* (1935), *Coolie* (1936) widely acclaimed for its depiction of social evils like cast system, Dalits, problems of untouchability etc. he had won various prestigious prizes for his contribution like sahitya academy award. Another significant writer of the same period was Raja Rao whose work *Kanthapura* (1938) is noteworthy one. Last and not the least of this trio is R.K.Narayan whose fictional town *Malgudi* gave the new dimension to the literature. His notable works like *Swami and his friends, The Guide, Waiting for Mahatma, The Bachelor of Arts* became very popular one.

After the independence writers turn their attention to the values of Indian culture and its importance. Social Realism was the call of the period. Prominent novelists of this period were Bhabhani Bhattacharya, Manohar Malgaonkar and Khushwant Sing. Female writers like Ruth Prawer Jhabwala, Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahegal and Anita Desai had also pen portray the society. Worth to mention some of the works of this period are *Goddess Named Gold* (1960) by Bhabhani Bhattacharya, *A Bend in the Ganges* (1964) by Manohar Malgaonkar and *The Train to Pakistan* (1956) by Khushwant Sing. All these novels reflect the social realism of the contemporary period. In these works, Partition and its impact on the people is shown. During this period there are some novels which came under the category of Political and Historical Novels.

In the recent period novels can be termed as the novels of new dimensions and experimentations. New talented writers like Salman Rushdie, Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth, Allan Sealy, Shashi Tharoor, Anurag Mathur, Makarand Pranjpee, Kiran Nagarkar devote their energy for the new individual quest for meaning in life. Women writers like Arundhati Roy, Meena Alexander, Kiran Desai, Jhumpa Lahiri are successful one. However, in the post-modern period the big challenge before the writer was complexity of the life's experience and its presentation in the form of words. Individual were living in the globalization but feels the trauma of loneliness, absurdity, lack of communication. These experiences were needs to give some vent in the form of literature. It was a big challenge for the writers. So the new experimentation continues in search of expressing those inner feelings, emotions and for this purpose graphic representation was suitable one for the writers as it gives or adds another dimension to the narrative techniques. Summarizing the graphic novelist accepted the new challenge and discovered the new way of the narratology. This is unique contribution to the development of the new genre in Indian writing in English. This genre has also rooted in the comics in India and abroad. In Indian comics history the role played by the Anant Pai is noteworthy. He joins the Times of India in 1961 and starts publishing *Indrajal* comics. His series of *Amar Chitra Katha* since 1970 becomes very popular one. *Krishna* is first story published followed by *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata.* the language use was Hindi and English initially later made available in other languages also.

In this way new literary movement of Graphic Novel emerged in Indian Writing in English. Through this, artists cum author or both explores different social, political, economic, environmental issues for their thematic treatment. For example Orijit Sen's graphic novel *The river of Stories* (1994) based on the Narmada Bachao Andolan, Sarnath Banerjee's *Corridor* (2004) narrates the contemporary condition of young generation, Amruta Patil's *Kari* (2008) describes the identity among the metropolitan city culture, Vishwajyoti Ghosh's novel *Delhi Calm* (2010) reflects on the Emergency of 1975, *Bhimayana* (2011) co-authored by Srividya Natrajan and S. Anand and illustrated by Durgabai and Subhash Vyam and comments on the issue of untouchability with the use of Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar's life, Sajad Mallik's *Munnu: A boy from Kashmir* depicts the story of a boy through childhood to a matured artist and writer in the backdrop of Kashmir problem. Along with these writers, there are various novelist contributed in this genre. To name few Abdul Sultan, Subhadra Sen Gupta, Tapash Guha, Naseer Ahemad are very significant one.

Statement of the Problem:

Until now the study of graphic novels is done on some of the aspects such as representation of historical wounds, violence, sexuality and the city, however, there are other dimensions in this genre remains unexplored. Through the present research, I want to explore how Indian Novel is evolving and developing in the complex conditions of the post modern age. Novelist's generic experimentation with the new ways/ method and matching themselves with the international currents or changes should be bring to the reader. Graphic novels and its use of different representation styles should be focused. For all this a review of the select novels is very significant one.

Objectives of Research:

- To study the generic experimentation in the Indian Graphic novels.
- To study the presentational aspects of these novels.
- To study the narratology of Indian Graphic Novels.
- To investigate various thematic issues in some select Indian Graphic Novels.

Problems to be investigated:

- The present study will investigate; what is the Graphic Novel? Popular novel and its experimentations and how it is changing the genre.
- Contribution by these graphic novelists in making it as branch of Indian Writing in English.
- Techniques of representation that is narratology in the works under study.
- Locate the different aspects of life through various thematic treatments in the works.

Review of Literature:

Since last few months I frequently visited the reservoir of the thesis that is shodhganga and also read some books, articles, research papers from online journals for collecting information about the research done on the present genre. There are near about seven to eight titles are available which are focusing on the aspects like postcolonial gothic, representation of history, violence , negotiations of home and belonging, graphic as pedagogical tool in Indian classroom, linguistic development through graphic narrative, visualizing wounds etc. As per the research in the present field is done in the University of Burdwan, West Bengal in 2017. Mr. Tuhin Majumdar was awarded Ph.D. on the title ***Visualizing Wounds:***

Representation of violence in contemporary English Graphic Novels. And a thesis is submitted in the university of Gauhati in 2018 by Sonali Rajkhowa under the title ***Contemporary Indian Graphic fiction and counter culture of the New Narrative: Reading the works of Saranth Banerjee, Parismita Singh and Samhita Arni.***

I had already read considerable number of graphic novel of few Indian writers and also read some research papers. Consequently I found that some of the aspects like graphic genre experimentation, presentational technicalities, and the narratology have not yet been studied. These novels have treated the themes in their artistic ways and gave new dimensions to the Indian writing in English. A research scholar Supriya Banerjee in her paper entitled *The Rise of the graphic novel and linguistic development in India* said "The Graphic Novels can become an aid for people who learn a secondary language as the texts presents language in action." (**South -Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies (SAJMS) ISSN: 23497858: SJIF: 2.246: Volume 3 Issue 6**) It means that graphic novels are the rich sources of language learning.

Another Ph.D. research scholar Antarleena Basu from the University of Hyderabad, in her research paper *Representation of History in Indian Graphic Novel: An analytical study of History through the frame of Graphic Narratives* said in the conclusion "The popularity of the historical graphic narrative is not a passing fad; it is an emerging trend that has trenched deep in the domain of Indian Writing in English." (Retrieved from:http://iafor.org/archives/journals/iafor-journal-of-arts-and humanities/10.22492.ijah.4.2.03.pdf on 25/01/2020 at 6.15pm)

A well known academician Prof. Pramod K Nayar in his book entitled The Indian Graphic Novel said in the introductory part " the ethnographic regional novel, the urban satire and other popular forms of Indian fiction in English one now adds, with pride, a brave new medium and genre: the graphic novel"

Hypothesis:

The researcher has some hypothesis; these are

I. Graphic novel is a generic experimentation of post modern time.
II. Indian graphic novelists in English are trying to match up with the international trends in literature.
III. As tradition Indian graphic novelists follows the western trends and also create their own unique graphic narratives.

IV. In post modern combined with globalized world there is a gap between traditional language and its meaning. So the graphic novelists are using symbols, images, charts etc to fill the gap and finding new avenues in the form of graphic narratives.

V. Indian graphic novelists are successfully handling the genre, they are not behind.

VI. Indian graphic novel is an serious attempt to handle the linguistic, cultural , socio-political, economical etc issues in an innovative ways.

Research Methodology:

In the present research, MLA documentation style of parenthetical citation in the text and alphabetical list of works at the end of the chapter i.e. in select Bibliography will be adopted. The research will be descriptive, analytical and investigative with illustration of certain figures. The select works of the Indian graphic novels shall be studied extensively.

Scope and limitation of the study:

Through the present research I would like to investigate the research problem by take into consideration of the following six graphic novels.

1. *Munnu: A Boy from Kashmir by Malik Sajad (2015)*
2. *Bhimayana by Srividya Natrajan(2011)*
3. *The River of stories by Orijit Sen (1994)*
4. *Delhi Calm by Vishwajyoti Ghosh (2010)*
5. *Corridor by Sarnath Banerjee(2007)*
6. *Kari by Amruta Patil (2008)*

In the present research I shall deals with the objectives i.e. the experimentation of these novelists and their contribution done in it on the presentation aspect. I will also explore the other issues such as eco-criticism, post-colonialism, autobiographical and biographical presentation, socio-politico-economical aspects so on. I also intend to probe the narratology.

Significance of the study:

The present research is very significant in the following ways

i. It is an attempt to trace the development of graphic novels in Indian context and critical analysis of what it is in the globalization.

ii. Whether Indian graphic novels can compete with the international trends in novel writing and where does it stands? is explored through the present research and bring it the centre stage.

iii. In the post modern combined with the globalized world there is radical changes in communication. In this age which is amalgamation of sounds, charts, symbols, images etc. How graphic novels are incorporating this aspects will be very important one. The present research intends to study this phenomenon.

Scheme of the chapters:

The thesis will be divided into five chapters. These are as follows -

Chapter-I- Introduction

It will take a cursory survey of the graphic novels as a form of English literature. It will also discuss and explore the western graphic narratives and the Indian narratives. How there is development over the years and established itself as a part of Indian writing in English. It will also deals with the biographical information of these artist and the novelist under consideration.

Chapter-II- A Critical Study of *The River of Stories* by Orijit Sen and *Delhi Calm* by Vishwajyoti Ghosh

It will deals with critical study of the novels and its exploration in direction of presentation and the experiments / innovations adopted. It will also trace the thematic issues reflected in the novels.

Chapter-III- A Critical Study of *Bhimayana* by Srividya Natrajan and *Munnu: A Boy from Kashmir* by Malik Sajad

It will deals critically with innovations done in narrating the autobiographical and biographical elements of the respective protagonist. It will be an attempt to explore the presentational aspect and generic experiment. . It will also trace the thematic issues reflected in the novels.

Chapter-IV- A Critical Study of *Corridor* by Sarnath Banerjee and *Kari* by Amruta Patil.

It will study the postmodern world of complexity and the identity problem/search for selfhood in these novels. It will be an attempt to explore the presentational aspect and generic experiment. . It will also trace the thematic issues reflected in the novels.

Chapter-V- Conclusion

This chapter will be a summary and conclude the discussion of the novels under study. It will also show the findings regarding the contribution of the novelist in innovations to make the genre as a part of Indian writing in English.

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Research Guide

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